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WOMEN OF THE FICTIONISTS

Writers, Both Early and Modern, Have Not Represented the Sex Correctly.

Supplied with Qualities They Do Not Possess They are Declared to be Types, Though Their Like is Not Found in Real Life.

Science Fitting.

The most repulsive character in all literature—that of Sin in "Paradise Lost"—is represented as a woman. Milton was prejudiced against the sex, and never did it justice from any point of view. To what extent later writers have been influenced by his example in this respect we cannot surely know, but it is certain, at least, that they have too often echoed his tone of general disparagement. It is only now and then that woman gets what we call a fair show in works purporting to tell the whole truth about her. The heroines of the novels and dramas are, as a rule, only of fragmentary correctness; they stand for conceptions of feminine nature which can be verified only in spots, so to speak. The fact is to be considered, of course, that woman in the abstract is an acknowledged bewilderment, but it does seem, nevertheless, as if those who make a study of her might present her more accurately in the form of individual types. She has been written about in a greater measure than any other object in the universe, and still it is practically impossible to find her in books and on the stage as she is in actual life. We get mere glimpses where we should have complete pictures, owing to the manner in which the reality is blurred with mistaken fancy and idle conjecture.

It is said that the Greek sculptor was compelled to select from seven models the radiant charms to compose his Venus rising from the sea; and the heroines of literature are necessarily constructed after the same piecemeal fashion. That is to say, the average heroine is a combination of qualities drawn from different sources, and the selections are seldom or never made with consistent and proper discrimination. Thus we are shown an order or women in whom art copies nature only to confuse the understanding, and to make facts have the effect of falsehood by reason of their forced relation to each other. They are true in a sense, but it is a sense that misleads when we come to make application of the knowledge so obtained. We readily discover that the women of our daily acquaintance do not harmonize with these literary characters. Not all of our skill and all of our patience can fit them into a common groove and cause them to have uniform manifestation. The points of difference are fundamental, and we are accordingly bound to see that the idea is a misrepresentation, or that the actual is fettered by conditions which prevent it from living up to the theory of its existence, and in either event our information is unsatisfactory.

ALL HEROINES ARE BEAUTIFUL.

For the most part, writers are agreed as to the matter of making their heroines beautiful. They consider it a branch of logic, as well as of taste, apparently, to depict a woman who is lacking in attractiveness of face, form and manners. Homely and awkward women are excluded from their calculations. The right of beauty to rule and

possess the earth is recognized as an indisputable proposition. They have no use for a heroine whose looking-glass tells her that it is impossible for her to believe herself handsome. The styles of beauty are various, but all marked and potent. Sometimes it is devoted to good and sometimes to bad purposes, but it never fails to have the intended effect. The heroes are so constituted that they cannot resist its influence, and do not seem to wish to if they could. In a word, the beautiful woman is almost uniformly represented to be the woman who brings things to pass, making supremely happy or abjectly miserable, as she may prefer. She has her way by right of this one precious gift; and other women, not thus favored of the gods, are obliged to let her take their lovers away from them and play havoc with all their social plans and ambitions. In some instances, it is true, she comes to their heroines in general terms, leaving particulars to the imagination. Homer, for instance, does not give a catalogue of the charms of Helen; he simply specifies her remarkable beauty by saying the old age itself is astonished at the sight of her, and does not wonder that Paris brought a ruin upon his country for her sake. It is the same with Shakespeare. His heroines are sketched in outline, and that is all; we are permitted to imagine for ourselves their peculiar points of fascination and to find likenesses of them among the women we know in actual life.

As a matter of fact, the woman whom a lover is always ready to adore, is not the woman whom a philosopher would choose to justify his conclusion; she is transfigured by his notion to her, and he cares nothing for the views of experts. This is by no means sure that Cleopatra was as handsome as a tragic and melancholy end, but even then her beauty enables her to triumph at the last moment by being such a charming corpse that death is divested of all its ugliness.

A FAULTY THEORY.

This theory of the superiority of beauty is all well enough as theory; but its acceptance involves endless clash of opinion and feeling. We have no standard of beauty by which to adjust rival claims and make peace between conflicting elements. When we say of a woman that she is handsome, it is like saying that a night is splendid; if we undertake to particularize we are lost in a vertigo of glittering adjectives. This is the fault of the average author. He takes details from several types and tries to put them together in vindication of an arbitrary personal preference, and the result is a composite woman whose counterpart does not exist. The really great writers are wiser in the matter. They paint the body else as she was to Antony. The pictures of Mme. Recamier, celebrated for her beauty even when she was wintry-haired and grandly feared her smiles more than any sword. The poets and novelists assume a privilege, therefore, that does not belong to them when they insist upon dowering their heroines with given attributes of beauty, and conveying that such is the only genuine article. It is their duty to deal more consistently with a subject that presents so many opportunities for honest and significant differences of opinion. However, it is not with regard to beauty alone that the average delineator of women is open to serious criticism. He is still more unfair and unkind to the sex in other relations. It is his constant delight to represent that women as a class never reason, but trust wholly to impulse; that they scorn all suggestions of the value of study and reflection, and guess their way through every emergency. The man of experience

knows that this is not true. There are frivolous women in plenty, to be sure, but there are frivolous men in equal proportion, and of the two the former is far more preferable. There is more to be said in favor of the intuitive perceptions of the majority of women than the boasted judgment of the majority of men. We see this illustrated every day in the general transactions of society. The liability to mistake is a common misfortune, but it is not true that the preponderance of error is on the side of the sex that is supposed to discard logic and trust to instinct. Masculine vanity stands in the way of the confession of the fact, but the fact is easily discernible to all who are not too miserably vain to see it.

They set forth, furthermore, that women are hopelessly extravagant and careless of the financial interests of their fathers and husbands. There is no more familiar character in plays and novels than that of the heroine whose demands for funds wreck the fortunes of the hero and drive him to prison or to suicide. We are asked to believe that women, as a rule, have no conscience and no discretion in money matters, when the truth is that they make purchases with a great deal more prudence than men do, and are really entitled to credit for most of the economy that men are said to enforce. The number of men who are ruined by extravagant wives is very small in proportion to the number of those who ought to be thankful that their wives have no such tendency to keep them out of bankruptcy. Not one woman in a thousand will deliberately spend more than her husband can spare, if he will only be candid with her and tell her all about his business affairs. The masculine habit of hiding the facts from wives in this regard is the cause of most of the alleged extravagance of womankind.

WOMEN ARE NOT SPENDTHRIFTS.

Another of the prevailing charges against the fair sex is that it is incapable of looking at any important matter in an impartial way. It decides everything, the cynics say, according to its prejudices, and not according to the evidence. Granting that this is true, can we be quite confident that these prejudices are often wrong rather than right? The feminine mind has a curious knack of anticipating the evidence. It may be mistaken, of course; but, on the other hand, it is very apt to be correct. Cases where the best judicial machinery cannot be implicitly relied upon. Nor is it a matter of fact, as is often asserted, that women are more at the mercy of their prejudices than men. They are more likely to formulate quick judgments, but that does not necessarily signify prejudices. Their methods of analysis are direct and penetrating, and we have much reason for believing that they are, to say the least, fully as exact as the more labored and pretentious processes of the other sex. What we denigrate as the "feminine intuition" is responsible for numerous glaring miscarriages of justice. The records of the courts are crowded with proofs of this statement; and in the face of such evidence, it is well to be slow of critic, as it is like taking aim by the tail. Still another count in the indictment is the allegation of constitutional fickleness. Taking a woman at her word, a answering her promises, is a task that is not to be undertaken by a man who is not of his own sex, but of the one that he is prone to misjudge and depreciate. In point of tenacity, the testimony of a woman is always better than that of a man. They have resources of deception, it must be allowed, and it is well that they are thus blessed, since it is often impossible for them to hold their own in dealings with men unless they resort to pretense and strategy.

The traditions and precedents of literature with respect to women are sadly defective; in short, they do not represent the sex as it has a right to be represented. It has outgrown all the excuses that ever ex-

isted for the various forms of disparagement to which it is still made subject. The women of the present age are worthy of the sort of treatment that has in it no hint of the old theory of feminine alliance with the powers of darkness. They are not what the current writers say they are. The familiar heroines of fiction are artificial, fantastic and disappointing. It is time they were taken down from their pedestals and put away with other useless machinery, to make room for women of an authentic description. Let us have heroines drawn from the life that is now being lived, and not from the realm of imagination in which fugitive qualities are patched together in such a manner as to make truth refuse itself and give a certificate of reality to a palpable falsehood.

THEIR SCHEMES WORKED WELL.

She Raised Her Voice, He Raised a Row, and Both Raised Some Money.

New York Herald.

It was a demure-looking little woman that walked into the ladies' cabin of a Pennsylvania ferry-boat a few evenings ago and took a seat in the cabin that fastidious people would have deemed unfit for a woman of her class. She was followed by the woman took a seat beside her, and, unfolding a newspaper, was, to all appearances, quickly engrossed in reading.

Three in the crowd and where the ferry-boat had just cleared the slip when the woman commenced singing in a rather melodious voice. The passengers ceased to read, and all eyes were turned to the demure little woman, who evidently intended making an appeal to the charitable.

The man who came into the cabin behind the woman dropped his paper also and eyed the singer sharply for an instant. She paid no attention to him, and at last, in a voice clearly heard by the passengers near about, the man asked the woman to stop singing, as she was disturbing the passengers and him in particular.

The request, or rather command, attracted the attention of those who heard it, and they looked upon the man with expressions of disgust. But the woman paid no heed to the insolent remark and continued with her little song. The man felt his seat and went to the forward deck. He reappeared with a deck-hand, who assisted the man in getting the rules, as she was disturbing the passengers and him in particular.

The woman had stopped singing, and was now looking innocently at the man and the deck-hand.

From two or three passengers came the cry of "Shame!" but the man whose nerves were so shaken by the woman's voice, and who wanted the rules enforced, seemed to pay no attention to the remarks until the woman addressed him.

"I'm sorry to have disturbed you, sir," she said, as she was about to leave the boat, "but I thought I might be able to gather a little money, which I need."

"Your singing did annoy me exceedingly," but if you are needy I'm sorry I stood in the way of your obtaining money, and I'll help you," he said, taking of his hat and dropping a dollar bill in it. Then he started around the passengers and one after another dropped silver pieces in the hat until a considerable fund had quickly grown. This the man transferred to the woman, and she evidently going to ask for more.

"How much did we get?" the man asked.

"Nearly \$5," she replied.

"Well, let's try the South ferry now," he said, and off they walked together.

A GIVE AWAY.

Peck.

Minnie Ball—I know you have proposed a good many times since last year began.

Amy Butt—How do you know?

Minnie Ball—Because your gown is bagged at the knees.

AN EMPEROR'S FOOTPRINTS

The Familiar Haunts of Dom Pedro, Who for Many Years Wisely Ruled Brazil.

The Palace of San Christavão—Solemn Pool-eries of Court Ceremonials—How the Emperor Dressed on State Occasions.

Special Correspondence of the Sunday Journal.

RIO DE JANEIRO, March 12.—So short a time has gone by since royalty lived and moved and had its being in Brazil, that visitors to the capital are still interested in its late familiar haunts, and the citizens, yet loyal at heart to the institutions to which they and their ancestors were born, take as much pride in showing them off as before they began masquerading at republicanism. One may spend a profitable week in visiting the several homes of the late Emperor and following the paths he trod, acceptably all men for more than half a century. First one should hunt up the oldest city palace, (built in 1739, in Praca D. Pedro Segundo, which, up to the last day of the empire, served as a sort of overflow house for the holding of court receptions on unusual gala days, and was thrown open to the populace on every Corpus Christi day, that they might enjoy a peep at the crown plate and jewels. For more than a hundred years the vice-regents of Rio had no official abiding place, until, in 1690, the Portuguese King purchased for that purpose a building in the Rua Direita, whose site is now occupied by the new exchange. It soon became too small for the increasing dignity of the colonial governors, and then the palace in the Praca D. Pedro Segundo was erected. There is nothing palatial or imposing about the latter, though it is said to have cost a mint of money—possibly because its ancient builders were better mathematicians than their employers in distant Portugal. It has had so many additions and annexations from time to time that its original character, if it ever possessed any, was long ago lost. In 1808, when King Joao VI arrived with his family and court (having been compelled to take refuge in Brazil to escape capture by the French), the palace was altogether insufficient for the shelter of so many persons. So the Carmelite friars on the opposite side of the street gave up their convent, the palace was enlarged and connected with the abode of royalty by a covered bridge thrown across the thoroughfare, which still remains. Another bridge, of light iron-work, also covered, spanning the Seventh of September street, connects the old convent with the Imperial chapel. Still there was not room enough to meet the extraordinary demands of this royal family and their numerous retinue, and building after building was appropriated and annexed, until the whole neighborhood became a continuous "palace." For many years Queen D. Maria I, who is spoken of as a Jezebel, no wise behind her Jewish prototype in temper—made her home in the Carmelite convent. The suite of rooms on the third floor, now occupied by the Instituto Historico—whose library possesses books of great value pertaining to Brazilian history—is pointed out as having been her private apartments.

DIVERSIONS OF ROYALTY.

Many queer stories are told of these early scenes of Portuguese royalty. For example, it is said that Miguel, brother of Dom Pedro I, and uncle of the late Emperor, used to divert himself and his profligate associates by seizing a sucking pig from some poor woman's stall in the public market, throwing it aloft, and receiving it neatly upon the point of his sword, while all the mothers thereabouts hastily hid their babies under their petticoats, expecting them to be served in the same manner. Sometimes the sport was varied by the dainty nobleman throwing up the squealing victims, that his Highness might catch them upon his weapon with less exertion.

It was in the days of King Joao VI that a wealthy merchant of Rio, named Elias Antonio Lopez, presented to the sovereign his own residence, situated in the beautiful suburbs of Sao Christavão, which in that day was considered the finest private house in South America. Whether the princely gift was a voluntary contribution or not, I am unable to say. Old King John had often visited the place in course of his country drives, and had conceived a great fancy for it; and there have been other anointed heads whose fancies it was not wise to oppose by any considerations of means or of taste. The happy recipient dubbed the estate the "Real Quinta da Boa Vista," but it continued to be quite as often called by the old name of Praca da Sao Christavão. It is certainly well suited for an imperial residence, occupying a commanding site overlooking the city, in one of its most picturesque suburbs. The edifice has been so many times enlarged since the generous Lopez's time that it is now a veritable city in miniature. Its most prominent feature is the left wing, a square structure three stories high, while the other wing has two stories. Yet, as a whole, it is charming, its white walls in bold relief against the dark-green mountains of Iguaya, in the midst of extensive grounds of much natural beauty, laid out in winding avenues, stretches of emerald lawn, artificial lakes, thickets of ornamental shrubs, with fountain and statues at frequent intervals, and shaded by the most splendid trees of the tropics.

ON THE WAY TO THE PALACE.

To reach Boa Vista palace, take a carriage at your hotel door and drive down the Rua Cattete, skirt the bay along the Praya da Gloria, rattle through the Rua das Mangueiras (street of leather pipes), dash under the aqueduct arches of Mata-Cavallos (horse-killing avenue), turn into the Rua das Invalidas (street of sick people), and then follow the Mata-Porca (pork-killing street), until at last you come to the direct road that leads out to Sao Christavão. The well-paved avenue has lamp-posts set on either side, and is lined with handsome suburban homes, set in gardens of perpetual bloom, shaded by feathery palm trees. That huge white building on the left, its glittering walls and cupola crowning an eminence overlooking the bay is one of the fine institutions of Rio which we shall not visit. It is the famous Lazaretto—"Imperial Hospital das Lazaretas"—founded by the Jesuits more than a century ago, and still cared for by the brotherhood of Santissima Sacramento da Candelaria. It is said to be crowded all the year around with lepers in all stages of the loathsome disease, and good Brazilians never look at its white walls without crossing themselves and muttering prayers for the helpless wretches. You pass groups of nuns, with skin covered panners containing fruit, vegetables, poultry and charcoal on their way to market; lavender wash-women, clad in "the ivory" of the sun (black hides), and not much else, balancing huge baskets of clothes on their heads; jaunty negroes, fat and bejeweled, and carriages of the wealthy, with coachmen and footmen in gorgeous liveries—all so precisely like other suburban streets that you are not aware of being within imperial grounds, till suddenly the great palace looms up before you. But it is not so near at hand as it looks, for the drives are winding and circuitous and you bowl along steadily at a smart pace for a full half hour—during the greater portion of this time the building is invisible—before you enter the splendid avenue of mango trees that leads